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**CENTRAL FALLS HIGH SCHOOL STANDOUT NAMED  
GATORADE RHODE ISLAND GIRLS TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 21, 2011) — In its 26<sup>th</sup> year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, in collaboration with ESPN RISE, today announced Aleide Fernandes of Central Falls High School as its 2010-11 Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year. Fernandes is the first Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year to be chosen from Central Falls High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the track, distinguishes Fernandes as Rhode Island's best high school girls track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year award to be announced in June, Fernandes joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Allyson Felix (2001-02, Los Angeles Baptist, Calif.), Derek Jeter (1991-92, Kalamazoo HS, Mich.), Candace Parker (2001-02, Naperville Central HS, Ill.), Abby Wambach (1997-98, Our Lady of Mercy, N.Y.), Mark Sanchez (2004-05, Mission Viejo HS, Calif.), Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt HS, Ia.) and Bianca Knight (2006-07, Ridgeland HS, Miss.).

The 5-foot-9 senior thrower won the shot put and the discus at the All-State Meet this spring for a second consecutive year. The three-time All-American launched the shot put 39 feet and the discus 121 feet, 5 inches. Fernandes also won a silver medal in the hammer throw with a toss of 158-10 which ranked as the No. 7 distance among prep competitors in 2011 at the time of her selection. The two-time Field MVP at the All-State Meet placed fifth in the hammer throw at this month's New Balance Nationals and concluded her prep career with 10 state titles.

Fernandes has maintained a B average in the classroom. She has volunteered locally with literacy-outreach programs and as a youth track coach.

"To be dedicated over the last four years like Aleide Fernandes has been and to see it through with her high level, it's spectacular," said Bob Palazzo, head coach of rival Classical High. "She's been an inspiration for that community in a time when not a lot is going right. She's the real deal."

Fernandes has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete in track and field on scholarship at Southern Connecticut State University beginning this fall.

The Gatorade Player of the Year program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by ESPN RISE and the Gatorade high school sports leadership team, which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Fernandes joins recent Gatorade Rhode Island Girls Track & Field Athletes of the Year Molly Reilly (2009-10, South Kingstown), Eryn Wheeler (2008-09, Coventry), and Victoria Flowers (2007-08, Classical) among the state's list of former award winners.

To keep up to date on the latest happenings, become a fan of Gatorade Player of the Year on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. For more on the Gatorade Player of the Year program, including nomination information, a complete list of past winners, and the announcement of the Gatorade National Player of the Year, visit [playeroftheyear.gatorade.com](http://playeroftheyear.gatorade.com).

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